Social Media: 
The Good, 
the Bad, 
and the Mysterious

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A Simplified History of the Web and the Popular Internet


- For a satirical example, see B1FF’s webpage: http://web.archive.org/web/20041204042147/www.panix.com/~clays/biff/

Web 2.0: more structure, richer interactivity and user participation

- Examples: Amazon, Blogs, EGroups/YahooGroups, Wikipedia, Del.icio.us, Myspace, Facebook, Youtube, Flickr, GoogleMaps, GoogleDocs
A Simplified History of the Web and the Popular Internet (cont.)

Client-Server architecture: Content is stored centrally on a server and retrieved locally by a client

• Examples: terminal-mainframe, email client-email server, browser-website

Peer to Peer (P2P): Challenge to the client-server model - each node or “peer” serves as both client and server

• Examples: USENET*, Napster*, BitTorrent, Skype*, YaCy

Cloud Computing: return to client-server model for richer Web applications

• Examples: Salesforce, Amazon Web Services, Google Docs
Content management system (CMS): software for maintaining and modifying a website through the website itself

- Examples: Drupal, Wikimedia, Wordpress, (Deme)
The Social Web

User-generated social content. Social web applications enable site visitors to submit content that others can access, such as photos, their own profile data, links to other web-sites, and comments on other users’ content.

Social networking. Users of social web applications join together in online groups and relationships (e.g. friends), which allow them to see identity-related information about the people to whom they are connected.

Collaboration. Users engage in conversations, co-creation of content (e.g. on wikis), collaborative filtering, and collective action.

Cross-platform data sharing. Increasingly, sharing content requires that a user be able to transfer data across sites, implying that the site on which the remote content is to be shared can interface correctly with the other site data. When the remote data need to be processed locally, the two sites must agree on its meaning, which is a defining characteristic of the semantic Web

from Todd R. Davies and Mike D. Mintz,(2009) "Design Features for the Social Web: The Architecture of Deme"
Social Media: The Good

Keeping in touch with friends and family
Sharing experiences with friends and the world
Learning about and meeting new people
Finding people who share your interests
Online environment reflects social structure in our lives, which may help us
Presenting a more complete view of yourself to the world than your appearance can convey
Other good effects?
Social Media: The Bad

Cyberstalking and predators
Bullying and harassment
Privacy leaks
Past behavior could haunt you later
Perhaps a false, mediated sense of connection with others
Other bad effects?
Social Media: The Mysterious

How do social networks and social media affect...

- how we spend our time?
- the type, quality, and number of relationships we have?
- the private and public meaning of our relationships?
- how we think about privacy versus openness?
- what we talk about?
- our ability to get together and work for changes in the world?
- other aspects of our lives?